

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 693

By Fraley

A RESOLUTION to commend Joe Yokley for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Joe Yokley is one such estimable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, born on May 1, 1922, Joe Yokley has lived most of his life on the Cumberland Plateau in Franklin and Marion Counties; and

WHEREAS, in order to help support his family, Mr. Yokley quit school and pursued employment at a young age; and

WHEREAS, despite this experience, Mr. Yokley recognizes the importance of an education and has worked his entire life, in various capacities, to enhance public educational systems; and

WHEREAS, during the 1950s, he served as the President of the School Board in Tinley Park, Illinois for four years; in this position Mr. Yokley served with acumen and alacrity, earning the respect of teachers, administrators, students and their parents alike for his outstanding commitment to education; and

WHEREAS, his unwavering dedication to the importance of education eventually led Joe Yokley to pursue his own high school diploma; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, at the age of seventy-eight, Mr. Joe Yokley completed his lifelong ambition, receiving his high school diploma from the Franklin County Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his steadfast commitment to education, Mr. Yokley is an avid environmentalist who opposes the clear-cutting of forests and the destruction of bio-diversity; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, he openly opposed the cutting of Franklin State Forest; and

WHEREAS, when the cutting of the forest was imminent, Joe Yokley suggested that the wood not used in the logging be given to the less fortunate to heat their homes; due largely to his efforts, this “waste” wood was sold at a nominal cost to people in need; and

WHEREAS, a staunch supporter of the working class, Mr. Yokley served as President of the Steel Workers Union in Winchester for eighteen years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Yokley was also an integral force in the construction of the Jump-Off community’s new Community Fire Hall; in addition to donating the land upon which the fire hall is built, Joe Yokley garnered the necessary help and materials to construct the much-needed building; and

WHEREAS, a political activist, Joe Yokley served as the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Marion County Democratic Executive Committee for four years and then as Chairperson of the Franklin County Democratic Executive Committee for nearly eight years; he has stepped down from the latter post, so that he may spend more time tending to the care of his ailing wife, Ventress; and

WHEREAS, he has also participated in numerous campaigns, including the 2000 Presidential Campaign, when he campaigned door-to-door in Iowa and Ohio for former Vice President Al Gore and Senator Joseph Lieberman; and

WHEREAS, Joe Yokley has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and is an exceptional asset to his community; and

WHEREAS, a devout and thoughtful Christian, he spends a great deal of his time and energies in service of the First Baptist Church in Cowan and its various ministries; and

WHEREAS, he has dedicated himself to improving the quality of life of his fellow citizens for more than eighty years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Yokley's remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to his unwavering reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and his uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, an extremely giving person, he epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, Joe Yokley possesses the sterling character and stalwart determination that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; possessed of a deep and abiding love for his wife, the Democratic Party, and the Baptist Church, Mr. Yokley serves as an inspiration to all whom he meets; and

WHEREAS, Joe Yokley is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Mr. Joe Yokley for his outstanding dedication to his community and his exemplary service to the people of the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.